



TEETH OF THE SHARK



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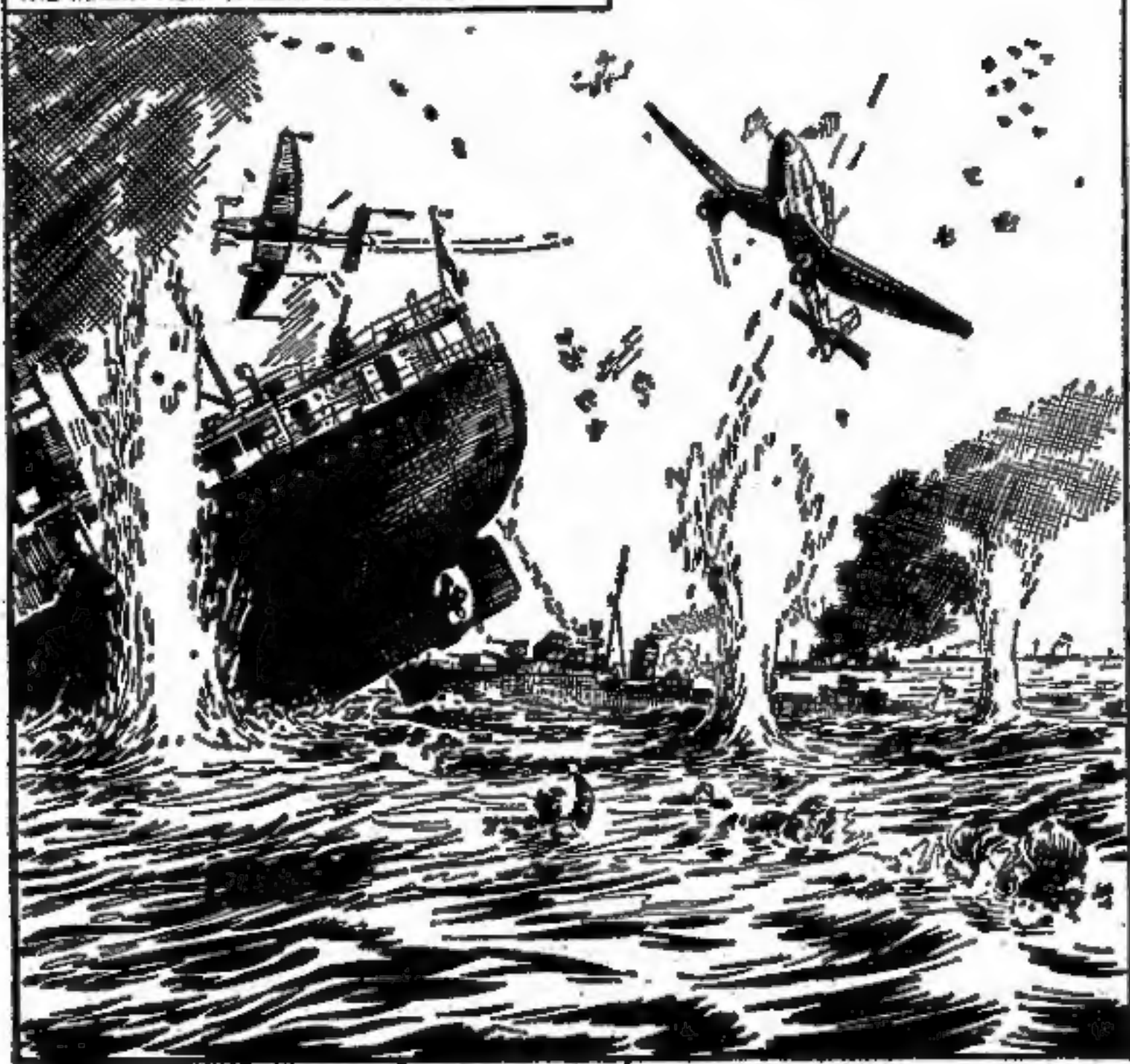
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TEETH OF THE SHARK

IN THEIR GALLANT ATTEMPTS TO CARRY VITAL FOOD AND AMMUNITION SUPPLIES TO WAR-ENCIRCLED MALTA, ROYAL NAVY MEN AND MERCHANT SEAMEN FOUND THEMSELVES COMRADES-IN-ARMS FOR THEIR CONVOYS RAN A MERCILESS GAUNTLET OF GERMAN BOMBS. THOSE WHO SURVIVED CALLED THE MALTA RUN "A GLIMPSE OF HELL..."



Chapter 1. New Command

IT TAKES ALL KINDS OF MEN TO FIGHT A WAR. THE BRAVE, THE STRONG, THE FRIGHTENED, THE HONEST, THE AMBITIOUS. THERE WAS LITTLE DOUBT INTO WHICH CATEGORY HENRY JACKSON SHARP FITTED.

YOUR PAPERS, SIR. MAY I OFFER MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION...

HAH / THANK YOU, JENKINS. IT HAS NOT COME BEFORE TIME, AND YOU. SHOULD HAVE HAD A COMMAND YEARS AGO BUT FOR THOSE SHORT-SIGHTED FOOLS UP AT ADMIRALTY!

COMMANDER SHARP BRACED HIMSELF AT HIS DESK AS IF HE WERE ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SHIPS HE HAD NEVER COMMANDED.

SEND A SIGNAL TO PORTSMOUTH, JENKINS. TELL 'EM WHEN TO EXPECT ME. I SHALL WANT A FULL SCALE INSPECTION, WITH A PARADE LAID ON, AS WELL.

RYE RYE, SIR!

THE ANTICIPATORY GLEAM IN THE WATERY EYES OF HENRY JACKSON SHARP BODED ILL FOR THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF HIS NEW COMMAND.

THAT'LL SET THE CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS. AND THAT'S ONLY A BEGINNING...

ONE OF THE SUBMARINES OF SHARP'S NEW COMMAND WAS AT THAT MOMENT NEARING HER BASE.

WELL, TOM, IT'S A DESK JOB FROM NOW ON FOR ME. THE SURGEON COMMANDER RECKONS I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS SORT OF LIFE.

THE OLD TUB WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT YOU ON BOARD, SKIPPER...

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LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HAWKE GAVE A WRY SMILE AND LOOKED KEENLY AT HIS YOUNG FIRST LIEUTENANT.

I'VE RECOMMENDED YOU FOR COMMAND, TOM. SHE'LL BE IN YOUR HANDS FROM NOW ON.

TOM STOREY BEGAN TO STAMMER HIS THANKS BUT THE OLDER MAN SILENCED HIM GRUFFLY.

I'VE ARRANGED A TRAINING EXERCISE FOR FIRST LIGHT, TOMORROW. THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS TO BE BRUSHED UP BEFORE THE NEW C.O. ARRIVES.

BUT YOU'RE LEAVING US TONIGHT, SIR...

Teeth Of The Shark

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MOORING LINES WERE SNAKING BETWEEN SUBMARINE AND QUAYSIDE NOW. LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HAWKE'S LAST VOYAGE WAS OVER.



YOU CAN HANDLE THE JOB, TOM. ANYWAY, THE OLD GIRL'S YOURS FROM HERE ON.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT FIRST LIGHT, TOM STOREY PROUDLY CONNED H.M. SUBMARINE TUDOR FROM HER MOORINGS AND HEADED HER FOR THE OPEN SEA. IT WAS A SAD MAN WHO STOOD ON THE JETTY, WATCHING HER GO...



GODD LUCK, TOM?

THERE FOLLOWED A HARD DAY'S TRAINING FOR THE CREW WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF AN OPERATIONAL SUBMARINE'S ACTIVITIES BEING TESTED TO THE FULL.

NOT BAD, LADS. A BIT SLOW THERE, NUMBER TWO!

A GOOD PLOT, NAV. WE'RE BANG ON TARGET. OKAY, CHIEF—TAKE HER UP!

DIVE! DIVE!
DIVE!



IT WAS A VERY TIRED CREW THAT TOM BROUGHT BACK TO BASE THAT EVENING. BUT EVEN AS THEY TIED UP, THEY WERE RUDELY WELCOMED BY THE STENTORIAN VOICE OF COMMANDER SHARP.

NICE OF YOU TO CALL ON US, *MYSTER* STOREY! STAND DOWN YOUR CREW AND REPORT TO MY OFFICE AT ONCE!

THE INCENSED C.O. STOMPED OFF ALONG THE JETTY TOWARDS HIS OFFICE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SQUARE, LEAVING A PUZZLED AND APPREHENSIVE YOUNG LIEUTENANT STARING AFTER HIM.

BLOW ME DOWN! THAT MUST BE THE NEW C.O. SOUNDS AS IF I'M FOR THE HIGH JUMP...

WHEN HE REPORTED TO THE COMMANDER'S OFFICE, TOM CAME IN FOR THE FULL BLAST OF HIS COMMANDING OFFICER'S DISAPPROVAL.



NOW THEN, YOUNG MAN.
I ARRIVE ON THIS STATION,
FIND YOU AND YOUR SHIP HAVE
PUT TO SEA. NO-ONE KNOWS
WHERE THE DEVIL YOU ARE.
YOU'VE GOT SOME EXPLAINING
TO DO, BY HEAVENS!

BUT, SIR, WE'VE BEEN OUT
ON AN EXERCISE. WE LEFT BEFORE
DAWN. WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE
ARRIVING TODAY...

COMMANDER SHARP SNORTED ANGRILY...



YOU DIDN'T KNOW? YOU SHOULD
HAVE MADE IT YOUR BUSINESS TO KNOW.
I WILL NOT TOLERATE SUCH SLACKNESS.
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN
RECOMMENDED FOR COMMAND...

Y-YES, SIR.
LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER
HAWKE DID...

ONCE MORE, TOM STOREY WAS RUDELY SILENCED.

VERY WELL, LIEUTENANT STOREY, YOU SHALL HAVE THE COMMAND YOU DESERVE. *H.M.S. SHARK*—SHE'S LYING AT INVERGORDON. YOU WILL LEAVE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING...

AYE AYE, SIR—
ER—THANK YOU, SIR.

TOO RELIEVED TO COME OUT OF THAT STORMY INTERVIEW WITH A COMMAND AFTER ALL, TOM DID NOT THINK TO WONDER AT HIS C.O.'S SEEMING CHANGE OF HEART.

PITY IT'S NOT IN THE *TUDOR* STILL, BUT *SHARK* IS THE RIGHT NAME FOR A FIGHTING SUB, BY GOLLY!

NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, IN THE LOCKED COMPARTMENT OF A NORTH-BOUND TRAIN, TOM TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS SOLITUDE TO READ THE SECRET PAPERS...

SHE'S NOT A FIGHTING SUB, AFTER ALL! JUST AN OLD TRAINING-BOAT—NO ARMAMENT EXCEPT THE THREE POINT SEVEN FORWARD—TORPEDO TUBES SEALED OFF! WE'RE TO CARRY SUPPLIES TO OPERATIONAL SUBS! OH, NO!

DIG FOR
VICTORY

WORSE WAS TO COME...

Teeth Of The Shark

WORSE WAS TO COME...

In accordance with this policy H.M.S. Shark will be based on Malta and will be used to ferry stores and ammunition to operational craft on patrol. SHARK will remain at the greatest possible depth... surfacing only to transfer her cargo when a rendezvous is effected.

To avoid any breach of security, their presence has been indicated that SHARK should be accompanied by a complement of 100 men.

To avoid any breach of security, Their Lordships have indicated that SHARK should carry a normal submarine's complement of Torpedomen, Gunnery Rates and so on. But these Ratings need not have reached a high standard of proficiency.

AT READINGTON, TOM STOREY GOT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE OF H.M.S. SARK. IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE SCRUFFIEST BOAT IN THE SUBMARINE SERVICE.

THAT'S A BREAK/
NO WONDER OLD
SHARP WAS
SMILING SO
SMUGLY...



BEFORE HE HAD EVEN STEPPED ABOARD, TOM RAN UP AGAINST ONE OF HIS MAKESHIFT CREW...



SMARTEN YOURSELF UP, MAN - YOU'RE A DISGRACE! NOW GET MY THINGS SHIFTED ABOARD AND TELL THE DUTY OFFICER THE NEW CAPTAIN HAS ARRIVED. MOVE!

TOM'S MEETING WITH THE FIRST OF HIS OFFICERS WAS JUST AS UNPLEASANT. THE DUTY OFFICER WAS SUB-LIEUTENANT SANDY BAIRD....



W-WELCOME ABOARD, SIR. YOU'LL BE THE NEW OWNER, NO DOUBT.

GOOD HEAVENS! CAN THIS BE THE DUTY OFFICER? THE BLIGHTER'S HALF ASLEEP!

Teeth Of The Shark

TOM WISELY DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE GREATEST SAILOR OF ALL TIMES, HORATIO NELSON. HE TURNED A BLIND EYE...



YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY BE THE DUTY OFFICER, AS YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY BEEN SLEEPING... AND NAVAL OFFICERS ARE NEVER ASLEEP ON DUTY. GET BELOW. I'LL SEE THE REAL DUTY OFFICER WHEN HE COMES OFF WATCH TOMORROW MORNING!

TOM WON THE UNDYING RESPECT AND ADMIRATION OF A MUCH-CHASTENED SANDY THE NEXT DAY, WHEN HE CONTINUED THE PRETENCE OF THE NIGHT BEFORE—BUT WITH AN UNMISTAKABLE NOTE OF WARNING IN HIS VOICE.



WHEN I ARRIVED ON BOARD LAST NIGHT, SOME LOUT TRIED TO PASS HIMSELF OFF AS THE DUTY OFFICER! FORTUNATELY FOR HIM, IT WAS TOO DARK FOR ME TO SEE HIS FACE. I LOOK TO YOU TO SEE THAT THIS DOES NOT OCCUR AGAIN.

AYE AYE, SIR. I'LL—ER—ATTEND TO IT! IT'LL NO' HAPPEN AGAIN, SIR.

FIVE MINUTES LATER, TOM SAW HIS NEW SHIP'S COMPANY FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEY WERE, AS HIS OLD TRAINING SCHOOL C.P.O. USED TO SAY, "ORRIBLE!"

SHIP'S COMPANY MUSTERED READY FOR YOUR INSPECTION, SIR.

THANK YOU, DUTY OFFICER... CARRY ON, PLEASE.

A CLOSER VIEW OF THE SHIFTLESS BUNCH DECIDED TOM THAT THIS WAS THE TIME TO GET TOUGH!

YOUR TURN-OUT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH—NOT BY A LONG WAY! THE SHIP'S COMPANY WILL NOW BE DISMISSED AND WILL FALL IN AGAIN IN THIRTY MINUTES' TIME, LOOKING SOMETHING LIKE A SHIP'S COMPANY! CARRY ON, CHIEF!

WALKING ALONG THE JETTY TOM QUESTIONED SANDY ABOUT SUB LIEUTENANT WILSON, WHOSE ABSENCE FROM PARADE HE HAD NOTICED.

RIGHT ENIGMA, I'M AFRAID THAT I SPOTTED THE ABSENCE OF OUR NAVIGATING OFFICER. I'LL WAGER THAT YOU'VE NO MORE IDEA WHERE HE IS THAN I HAVE.

YOU SEE, HE LIVES ASHORE, SIR, AND...

AS IF TO SAVE SANDY ANY FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT THE MISSING NAVIGATOR CHOSE THAT VERY MOMENT TO TURN UP...

NEVER MIND! UNLESS I'M VERY MUCH MISTAKEN, HERE IS THE GENTLEMAN NOW! YOU CMT ALONG AND SEE TO THE PARADE. I'LL DEAL WITH THIS!

BYE BYE, SNAPPER.

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, REGGIE WILSON SEEMED TO HAVE SOME STRANGE IDEAS ABOUT THE RESPECT DUE TO SENIOR OFFICERS.

I SAY, OLD FRUIT, ARE YOU THE NEW SKIPPER? PLEASSED TO MEET YOU AND ALL THAT! HANG ON, I'LL JUST PARK THE OLD TIN-LIZZIE!



YES, I AM THE NEW CAPTAIN—AND YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE A VERY SERIOUS TALK...



YOU CAN TURN YOUR TIN-LIZZIE AROUND AND DRIVE IT BACK TO WHEREVER YOU'VE BEEN HANGING OUT WHILE THE REST OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY HAVE ROUGHED IT ON BOARD. REPORT TO ME THE INSTANT YOU GET BACK! SELL THOSE GOLF-CLUBS WHILE YOU'RE AT IT—YOU WON'T NEED THEM WHERE YOU'RE GOING!

AS HE WATCHED REGGIE HASTILY DRIVE OFF, TOM REALISED JUST HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS GOING TO BE, LICKING HIS SHAKY CREW INTO SHAPE.



WHAT A SHAMBLES! OLD SHARP MUST HAVE KNOWN WHAT HE WAS LETTING ME IN FOR. WILL I EVER GET SHARK OUT OF HARBOUR — LET ALONE REACH MALTA?

FOR THE NEXT WEEKS, WHILE DOCKYARD WORKERS FINISHED THE JOB OF TURNING H.M.S. SHARK INTO AN UNDERWATER TRAMP STEAMER, TOM DROVE HIS CREW UNMERCIFULLY, JUST WHEN THINGS WERE BEGINNING TO GO WELL, HE FOUND ANOTHER CRISIS ON HIS HANDS.



YES — WHAT IS IT, NAV?

CAN YOU COME TO THE CONTROL ROOM, SIR? IT'S CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GRIMSHAW — I THINK THE OLD BOY IS OFF HIS CHUMP!

HE FOUND THE CHIEF TREMBLING AS IF IN A FEVER, HIS VOICE RAMBLING DELIRIOUSLY.



... I CAN'T HELP YOU MATES — I CAN'T HELP YOU! WE'RE GOING DOWN ...

ALL RIGHT, NAV, I'LL ATTEND TO THIS. OFF YOU GO. NO NEED TO BROADCAST IT — OKAY?

AYE AYE, SKIPPER — MUM'S THE WORD!

C.P.O. GRIMSHAW WAS OBVIOUSLY IN A BAD WAY, SO TOM TOOK HIM BACK TO HIS OWN CABIN AND TRIED TO MAKE HIM TALK.



COME ON, CHIEF—
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
GET IT OFF YOUR MIND
AND YOU'LL FEEL BETTER,
I'M SURE.

BUT THE OLD CHIEF WOULD NOT CONFIDE IN TOM—
NOT YET?

I'M ALL RIGHT
NOW, SIR. THANKS,
BUT—THERE'S NOTHING
YOU CAN DO—NOTHING
ANYONE CAN DO! I'LL
GET ALONG NOW,
SIR.



VERY WELL,
CHIEF—IF YOU'RE SURE
YOU CAN MANAGE, COME
AND SEE ME ANY TIME!

THE C.P.O. HAD SCARCELY LEFT WHEN H.M.S. SHARK'S
SAILING ORDERS ARRIVED...

SIGNAL FROM
ADMIRALTY, SIR. 'SHARK'
WILL SLIP AND PROCEED TO
RENDEZVOUS WITH CONVOY
P.Z. EIGHTY-ONE, O-SEVEN-
FOUR-FIVE HOURS, TOMORROW.
ANY REPLY, SIR?

NO, SPARKS.
JUST ACKNOWLEDGE,
IF YOU PLEASE.



CONVINCING THE AGED SUBMARINE OUT OF HARBOUR, TOM KNEW THAT THE FULL EXTENT OF COMMANDER SHARP'S INTELLIGENCE AHEAD OF HIM.

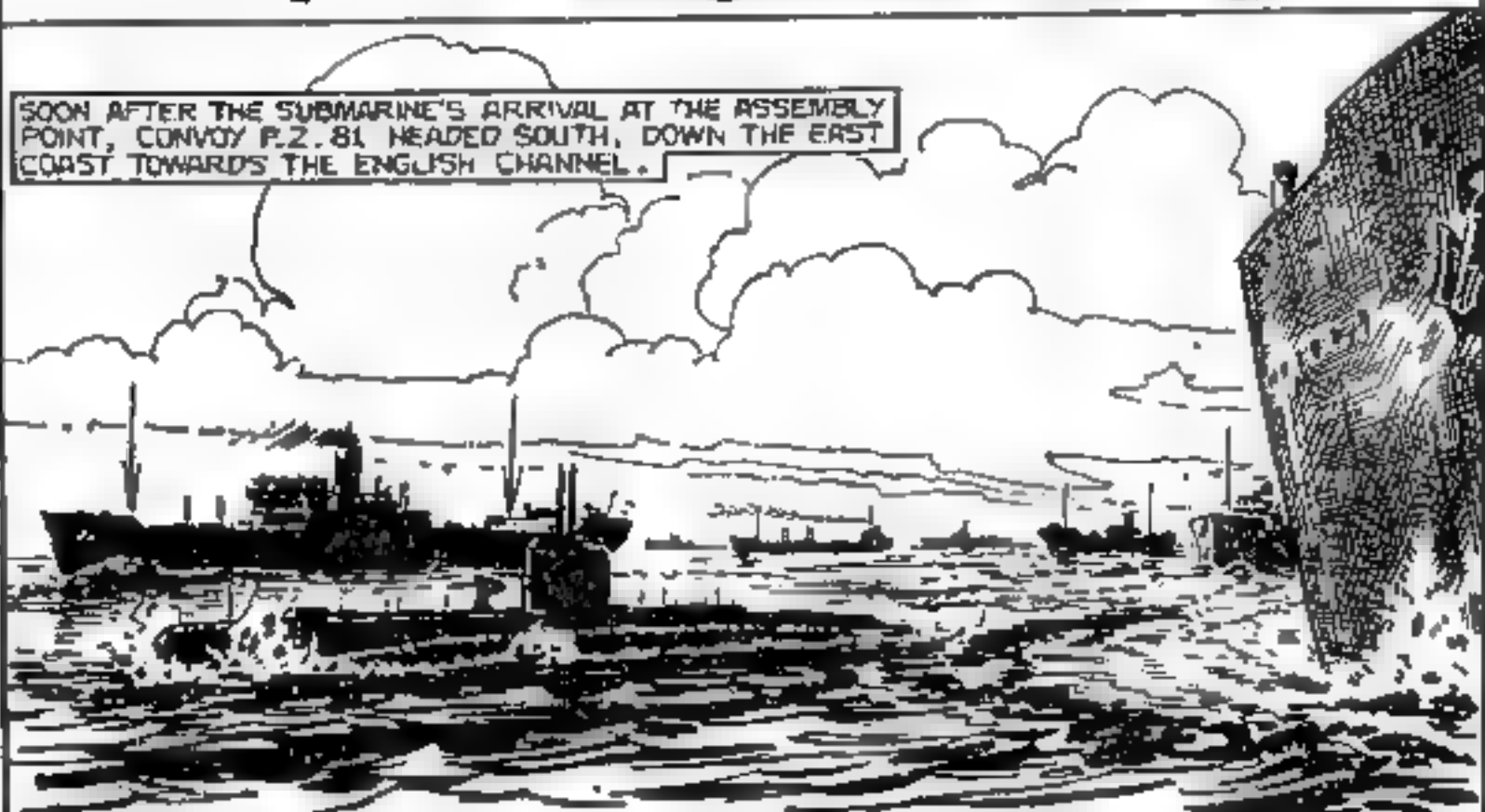
GROUP UP —
HALF-AHEAD BOTH-
MIDSHIP'S.

AS SHARP VENTURED OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN PERILS OF THE OPEN SEA, TOM DECIDED TO QUIT THE SURFACE FOR HE DID NOT WANT TO BE SUNK BEFORE THEY EVEN MET THE CONVOY.

PREPARE TO
SUBMERGE / HANDS
TO DIVING STATIONS!

Chapter 2. *Dangerous Passage*

SOON AFTER THE SUBMARINE'S ARRIVAL AT THE ASSEMBLY POINT, CONVOY P.Z. 81 HEADED SOUTH, DOWN THE EAST COAST TOWARDS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL.



THEY FLOODED ALONG AT A MERE FIVE OR SIX KNOTS, THE SPEED SET BY THE SLOWEST OLD TRAMP STEAMER...

IF WE REDUCE SPEED ANY FURTHER, PILOT, WE'LL BE PINCHED FOR PARKING. TAKE OVER THE WATCH, WILL YOU? I'D LIKE TO HAVE A WALK ROUND BELOW DECKS...



AYE AYE, SKIPPER.

DOWN IN THE CONTROL ROOM - TOM'S FIRST CALL - HE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND AN ABLE SEAMAN ON THE WHEEL...



HELLO - THOMPSON, ISN'T IT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE WHEEL?

I'M RELIEVING THE COX'N, SIR. HE'S A BIT OFF-COLOUR. GONE TO LIE DOWN IN HIS CABIN.

WHEN HE HAD FINISHED HIS TOUR, TOM
FETCHED THE OLD CHIEF UP ON DECK
ON THE PRETENCE OF INSPECTING
SHARK'S AFTER CASING.

SHE SEEMS TO BE SEAWORTHY ENOUGH,
CHIEF. I NOTICED THAT THOMPSON WAS TAKING
YOUR TRICK ON THE WHEEL. IS THERE ANYTHING
I CAN DO? WHY DON'T YOU GET IT OFF
YOUR CHEST?

W-WELL,
SIR...



SLOWLY, RELUCTANTLY, AT FIRST, THEN IN A SPATE
OF WORDS, GRIMSHAW TOLD TOM THE WHOLE STORY
OF HIS SHAME—OF HIS TWO SUB DISASTERS AND
HIS LOST NERVE.

...SO THAT'S HOW
IT IS, SIR. TWICE MY
SUBS'VE GONE DOWN—
AND MOST OF THE LADS
WITH THEM. IT'S
HORRIBLE, SIR! THE
THIRD TIME...

NO REASON WHY THERE
SHOULD BE A THIRD TIME,
CHIEF—IF WE ALL DO OUR
JOBS PROPERLY...



SUDDENLY TOM'S WORDS WERE INTERRUPTED BY A HAIL FROM THE CONNING TOWER...

SIGNAL FROM
THE FLAGSHIP, SIR—
AIRCRAFT WARNING
RED!

RIGHT, ROGERS. ASK
MISTER WILSON TO BRING
THE HANDS TO ACTION
STATIONS! CHIEF—GET
ON THAT WHEEL AND KEEP
US OUT OF TROUBLE,
WILL YOU?

AYE AYE,
SIR! I'LL DO
MY BEST!

BY THE TIME TOM GAINED THE CONNING PLATFORM,
THE FIRST ENEMY AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN SIGHTED.

WHAT
ARE THEY
SKIPPER?

HARD TO TELL AT THIS RANGE,
NAV. PROBABLY CONDORS FROM ONE
OF THE COASTAL AIRSTRIPS IN NORWAY.
ANYWAY, WE'LL SOON KNOW...

BOMBS BEGAN TO GEYSER INTO THE SEA AROUND THE MERCHANT SHIPS - AND CLOSE TO SHARK'S SLEEK STEEL SIDES, TOO.

HARD-A-PORT - GROUP UP - FULL AHEAD, BOTH ENGINES!

FOR PETE'S SAKE GET THAT GUN INTO ACTION!



THE OLD SUB STARTED TO TURN - BUT FAR TOO SLOWLY. ONE STICK OF BOMBS NEARLY HAD HER.



CHIEF! YOU'LL HAVE TO BE QUICKER THAN THAT, WE'RE RELYING ON YOU!

THE LAST THING CHIEFY WANTED WAS TO CATCH ANOTHER PACKET. FRANTICALLY HE SPUN THE WHEEL. PERHAPS THOSE FEW WORDS OF TRUST AND RELIANCE PUT THE OLD COX'N ON HIS METTLE AND BANISHED THE NAGGING FEARS FOR THE MOMENT.



COME ON, YOU UGLY GREAT SARDINE - GET ROUND!

THE NEXT EVASIVE TURN WAS SHEER
COPY-BOOK STUFF.

THAT'S FINE /
WE MIGHT COME OUT
OF THIS ALIVE —
YET!

THE MAN'S A
MAGICIAN! A FEW
MAGIC WORDS AND CHIEF
TURNS THE OLD TUB
ON A TANNER!

AT LAST, THE GUN'S CREW OPENED FIRE —
BUT MUCH TOO LATE, FOR THE BOMBERS
WERE ALREADY MAKING OFF. A FLIGHT OF
SPITFIRES HAD ARRIVED.

GUN'S CREW—CHECK, CHECK,
CHECK / CEASE FIRING—TRAIN
FORE AND AFT! THE R.A.F. BOYS
DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO BEING
SHOT DOWN BY THE NAVY!

BUT THE SHARK'S TARDY GUNNERY HAD BEEN NOTICED BY THE FLAGSHIP, THE CRUISER, H.M.S. BANKSHIRE.

SIGNALMAN — MAKE TO THAT SUBMARINE. 'WHY SO LONG IN OPENING FIRE?'

AYE AYE, SIR.

TOM TOOK A CHANCE AND COVERED UP FOR HIS RAGGED CREW, AN ACT OF KINDNESS WHICH DID NOT GO UNNOTICED BY THEM.

WHAT'S THE OLD MAN SENDING, SCOUSE? IS HE DROPPING US IN THE SOUP?

'...ER... SORRY FOR... DELAY, STOP. BAD... JAM... NOW... CLEARED, STOP.' NO MATE, HE'S NOT DROPPED US IN IT. HE'S COVERED UP FOR US! CHALKY, THIS GUN'S CREW'S GOING TO BE THE BEST IN THE FLEET. WE'VE GOT TO BACK THE SKIPPER UP — HE'S A GOOD-UN!

THE *BANKSIA*'S CAPTAIN WAS NOT FOOLED. BUT HE KNEW A LITTLE ABOUT THE *SHARK*—AND HER CREW.



'BAD JAM' EH?
I SHOULD THINK SO! IT'S
THAT SLB'S SKIPPER WHO'S IN
A JAM. HE'LL NEED A LARGE
SLICE OF LUCK BEFORE WE
REACH MALTA!

P.Z. 81 WAS HALF-WAY TO GIBRALTAR WHEN THE FIRST OF THE BOMBING RAIDS BEGAN. THE STUKAS PLUMMETED DOWN, SEEMINGLY IMPERVIOUS TO THE CURTAIN OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE THAT DOTTED THE SKY...



Teeth Of The Shark

BRACKETED BY EXPLODING BOMBS,
A.M.S. SHARK BOMBED ON THE
WATER LIKE A CORK.

COULDN'T WE
TAKE HER DOWN,
SKIPPER— GIVE THIS
LOT A MISS FOR A
WHILE?

SORRY, NO. IT'S A NICE THOUGHT, BUT
WITH ALL THIS PANIC WE'D PROBABLY BE
ON THE RECEIVING END OF A PATTERN OF
BRITISH DEPTH CHARGES!

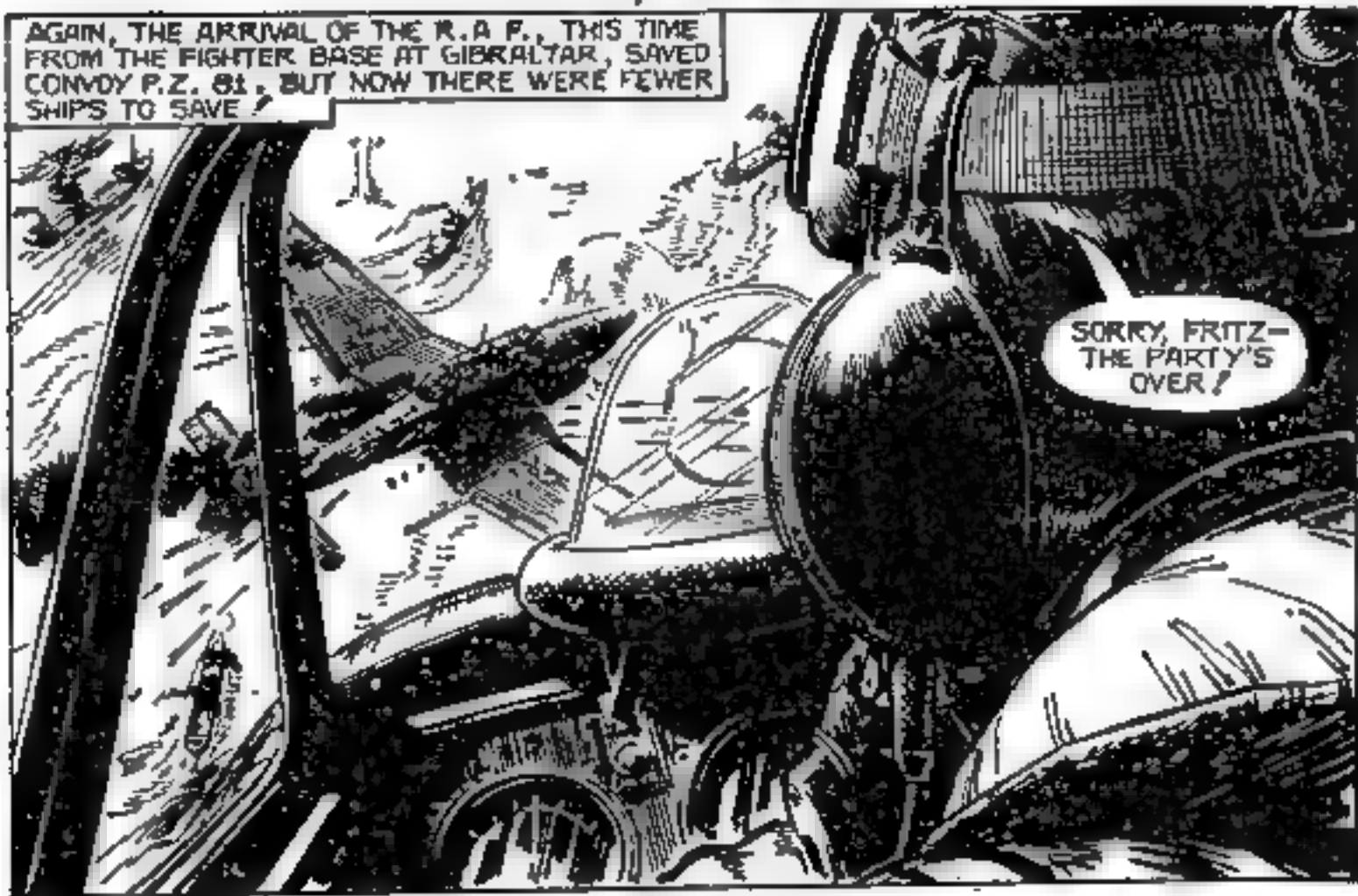


THE ENERGY WAS NOT GETTING IT
ALL HIS OWN WAY, OF COURSE...

GOT 'IM /
NEXT, PLEASE.



AGAIN, THE ARRIVAL OF THE R.A.F., THIS TIME FROM THE FIGHTER BASE AT GIBRALTAR, SAVED CONVOY P.Z. 81, BUT NOW THERE WERE FEWER SHIPS TO SAVE!



SORRY, FRITZ—
THE PARTY'S
OVER!

GIBRALTAR. PEACE FOR A FEW DAYS, FOR THOSE WHO HAD SURVIVED THIS FAR.

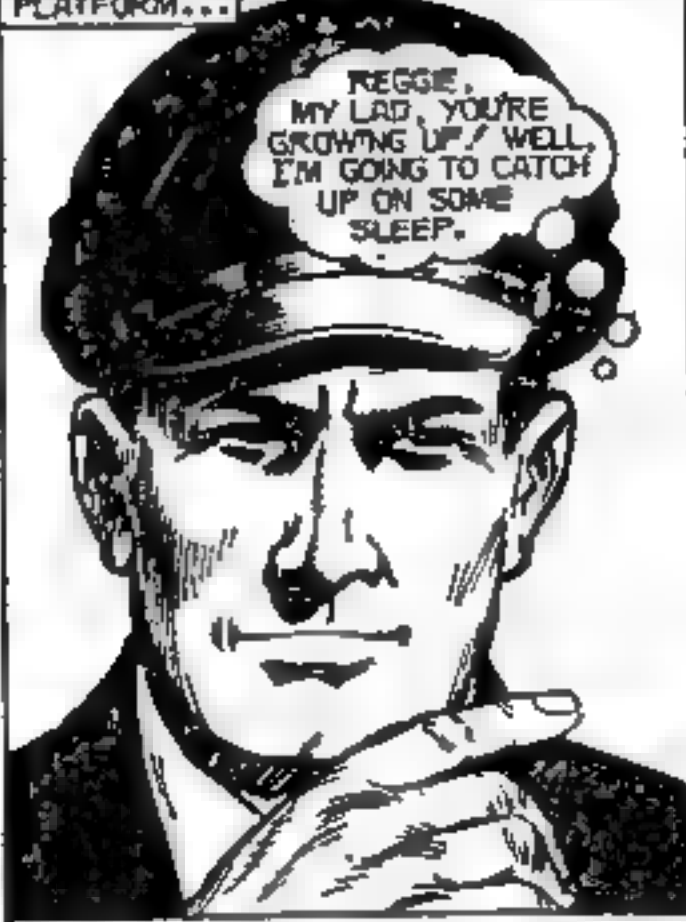
I EXPECT YOU'LL BE
DASHING OFF TO SOME RATHER
SMART COCKTAIL PARTY AT THE
BIGGEST HOTEL, EH, NAV?

WELL, AS A MATTER
OF FACT, SKIPPER, I'VE
ARRANGED TO TAKE CHIEFY
AND A FEW OF THE LADS FOR
A MEAL. THEY'RE A
GOOD BUNCH!



TOM GRINNED WITH PLEASURE AS SUB
LIEUTENANT WILSON LEFT THE CONNING
PLATFORM...

REGGIE,
MY LAD, YOU'RE
GROWING UP! WELL,
I'M GOING TO CATCH
UP ON SOME
SLEEP.



TO CELEBRATE THEIR BRIEF RESPIRE FROM DEATH, THE CREWS OF ALL SHIPS, ROYAL NAVY AND MERCHANT NAVY, SET OUT TO ENJOY THE DELIGHTS OF GIBRALTAR'S MAIN STREET.



SHORE PATROLS AND MILITARY POLICE STARED AT THE REVELLERS WITH UNSEEING EYES. IT WAS POINTLESS ARRESTING MEN WHO MIGHT BE DEAD BEFORE THEIR CHARGES WERE READ OUT!



MOST OF THE SALORS HAD DONE ENOUGH FIGHTING TO LAST THEM FOR A LONG TIME, BUT TOM MET SOME IN THE DOCKYARD WHO HAD NOT. IT SEEMED.

I'LL TEACH YOU TO CALL ~~SARAK~~ A ROTTEN GUNNERY SHIP...
OUPH?

SO SHE IS —
UGH — NOT FIT TO
SAIL WITH A FAST-
FING CRITTER LIKE
THE ~~DEATH SHARK~~...
OUPH?



HE RECOGNISED
SOME OF THE MEN
AS MEMBERS OF
HIS CREW...



AH, THOMPSON — IT'S YOU, IS
IT — AND A COUPLE OF YOUR MISS-MATES.
WELL, I'LL NOT HAVE IT SAID THAT MY SHIP'S
COMPANY LACKS MANNERS. TAKE THIS MONEY
AND GO AND BUY YOUR CRITTER CHUMS A
FEW DRINKS... AND APOLOGISE NICE-LY TO
THEM, YOU UNCOUTH ~~MARKERS~~

... ER —
THANK YOU,
SIR. I MEAN —
AYE AYE,
SIR?

TOM'S TACTFUL APPROACH IMPRESSED THE GROUP—
FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE.

COR / YOUR SKIPPER'S A
PROPER GENT / I TAKE BACK ALL
I SAID ABOUT THE SHARK. LET'S
GO—I'D LIKE TO DRINK HIS
HEALTH /

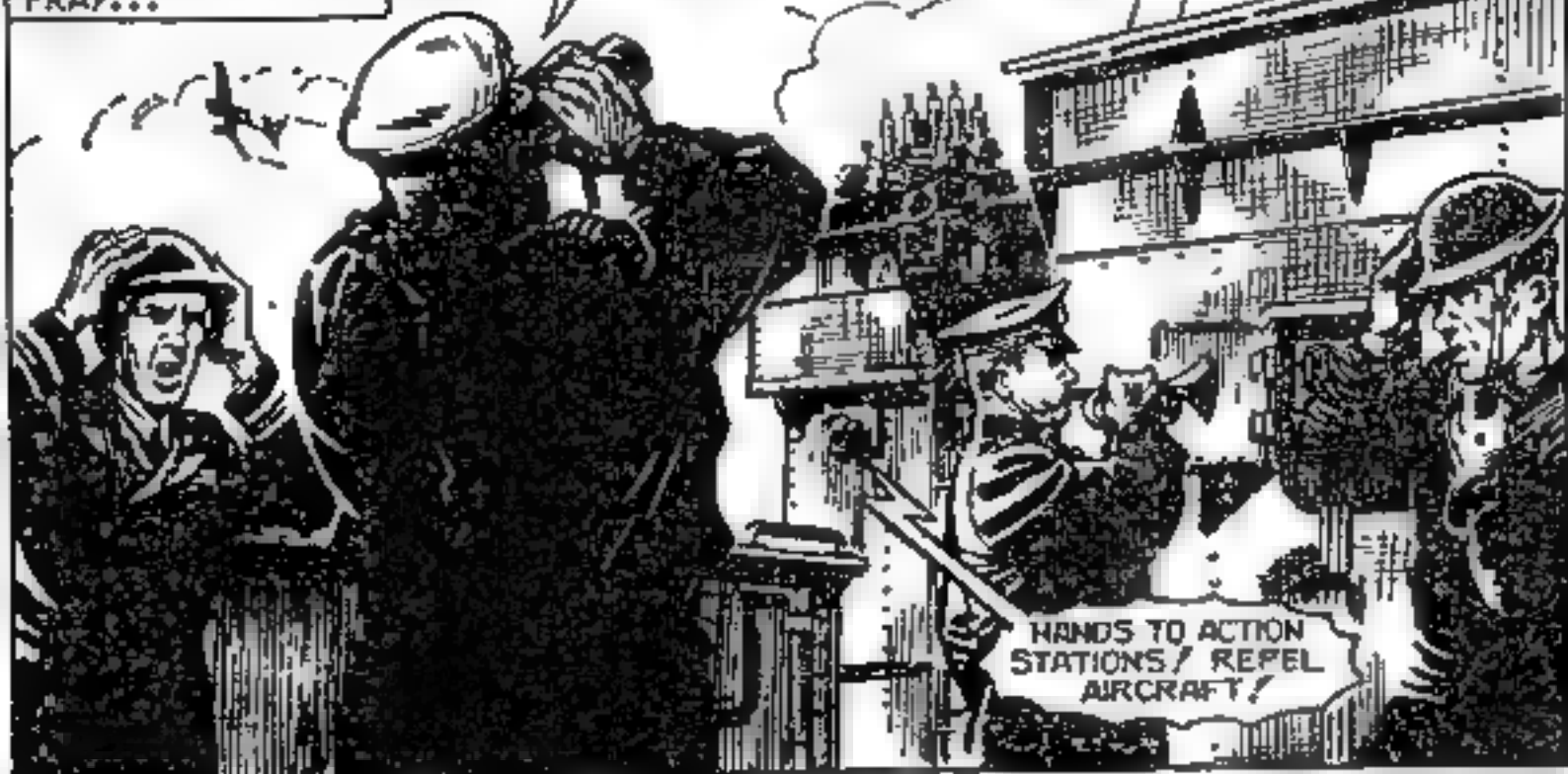
YES, HE'S ALL RIGHT,
IS THE SKIPPER / THIS ISN'T
THE FIRST TIME HE'S LET US
OFF LIGHTLY.

BUT GIBRALTAR WAS ONLY A BREATHER
BETWEEN ROUNDS. THE CONVOY BEGAN
THE SECOND LEG OF ITS JOURNEY AND
ONCE CLEAR OF THE STRAITS OF
GIBRALTAR, THE NAZI VULTURES
SWOOPED AGAIN...

ACHTUNG,
ACHTUNG / WE WILL
ATTACK IN FLIGHTS,
RED ONE LEADING,
TEN SECONDS
INTERVAL...

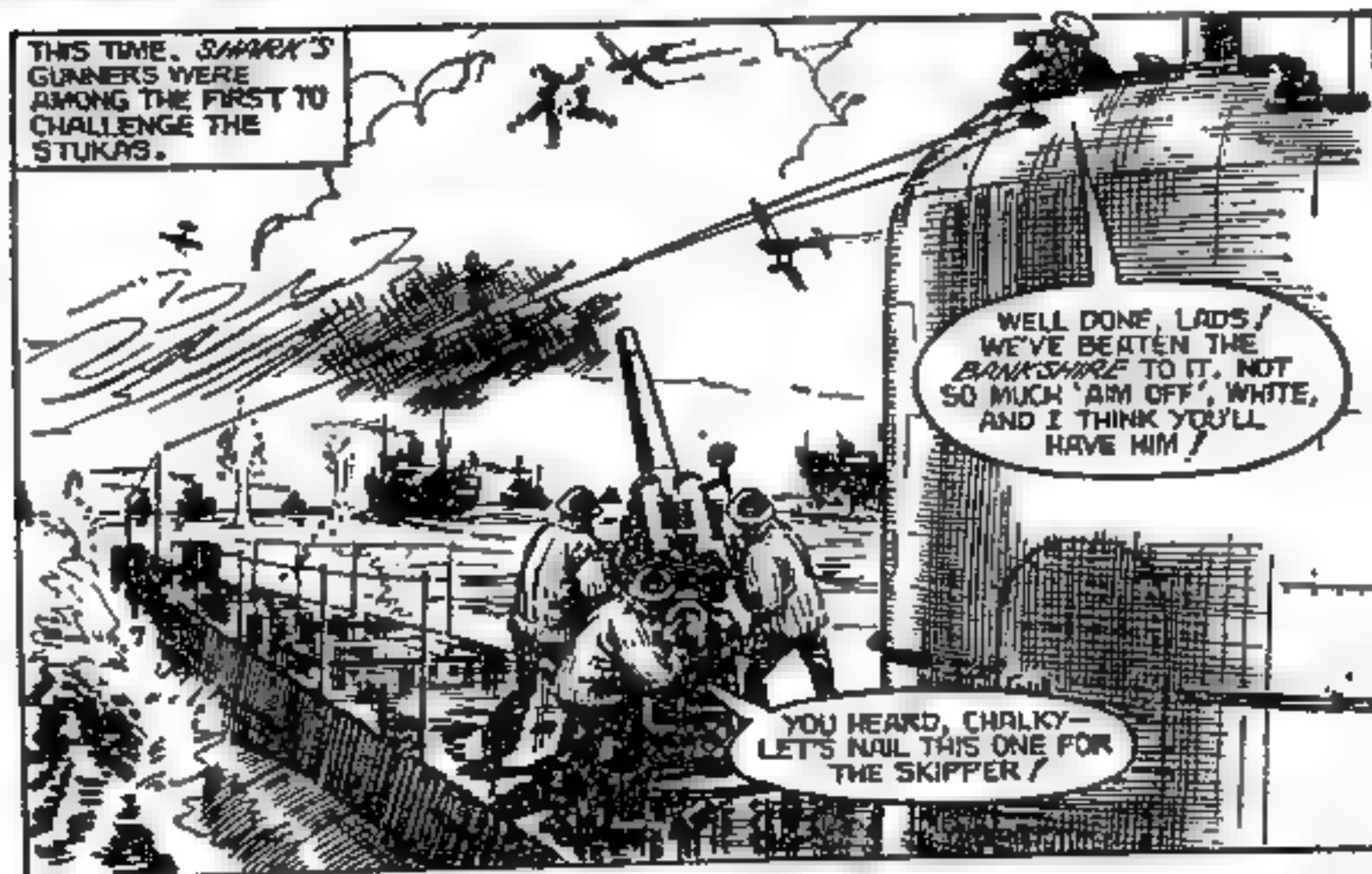
ON EVERY SHIP, FROM THE POWERFUL CRUISER TO THE SMALLEST MERCHANTMAN, GUN CREWS NERVED THEMSELVES FOR THE FRAY...

HERE THEY COME AGAIN! THE BLIGHTERS HAVEN'T WASTED MUCH TIME!



HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS! REPEL AIRCRAFT!

THIS TIME, *SHARK'S* GUNNERS WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO CHALLENGE THE STUKAS.



WELL DONE, LADS! WE'VE BEATEN THE *BANKSHIRE* TO IT. NOT SO MUCH 'ARM OFF', WHITE, AND I THINK YOU'LL HAVE HIM!

YOU HEARD, CHALKY—LET'S NAIL THIS ONE FOR THE SKIPPER!

SALVO AFTER SALVO THEY HURLED AT THE ATTACKING PLANES. AT LAST SAMMY COULD SAY THAT SHE WAS EARNING HER KEEP! THREE MORE ROUNDS—AND THEN A HIT!



THE SUBMARINE'S GUN CREW WENT WILD WITH TRIUMPH...



GOT 'EM!

NOW THOSE BANGBANG BOYS OWE US A DRINK!

DURING THE LONG HOURS OF DAYLIGHT, THE CONVOY CONTINUALLY AND ONLY DARKNESS BROUGHT ANY RESPITE.

SECURE FROM ACTION STATIONS, LADS—JERRY'S GONE HOME FOR THE NIGHT! WELL DONE, I'M PROUD OF YOU ALL! GET WHAT SLEEP YOU CAN NOW.



WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME REST, SIR? I'LL TAKE THE FIRST WATCH.

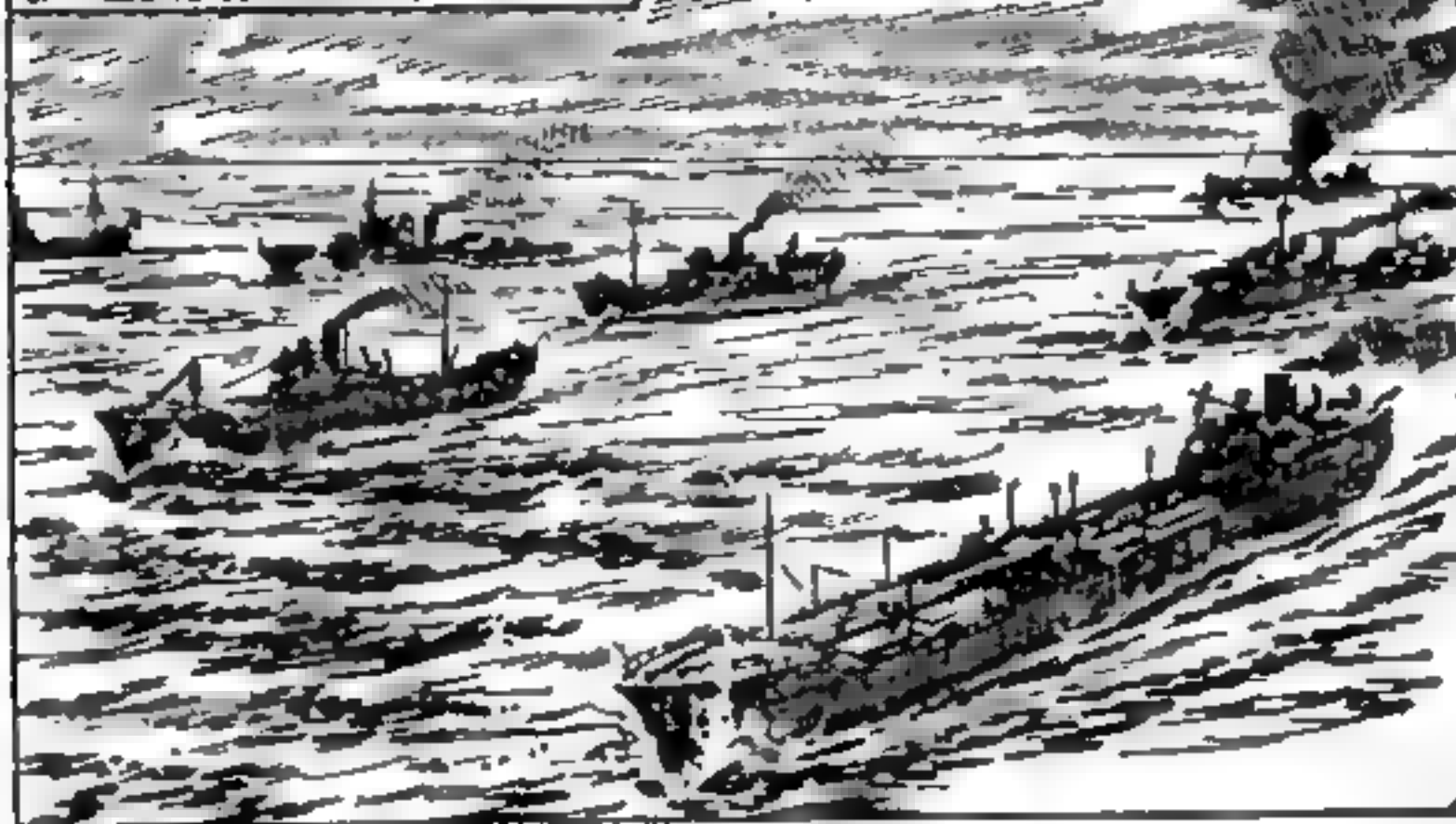
WITH THE FIRST GLIMMER OF DAWN, THOUGH, THE ENEMY RETURNED TO THE ASSAULT.

AIRCRAFT BEARING GREEN FOUR-FIVE — ANGLE OF SIGHT, THREE-O-SIX

CAN YOU SEE THEM, NAVY? MY EYES ARE NOT USED TO THE LIGHT YET.

I SHOULD SAY SO, SKIPPER! THERE'S ABOUT HALF THE GERMAN AIR FORCE OUT THERE!

EACH DAY, THE SUN ROSE ON FEWER SHIPS AND THERE WERE MANY HUNDREDS OF MILES TO COVER STILL.



THEN, ONE MORNING ...

I DON'T LIKE IT, NAV!
HALFWAY THROUGH THE FORENOON
WATCH AND NO SIGN OF A JERRY
PLANE. OUR LITTLE PLAYMATES
ARE UP TO SOMETHING. I'LL BE
BOUND. WISH I KNEW WHAT
THEY WERE DOING...

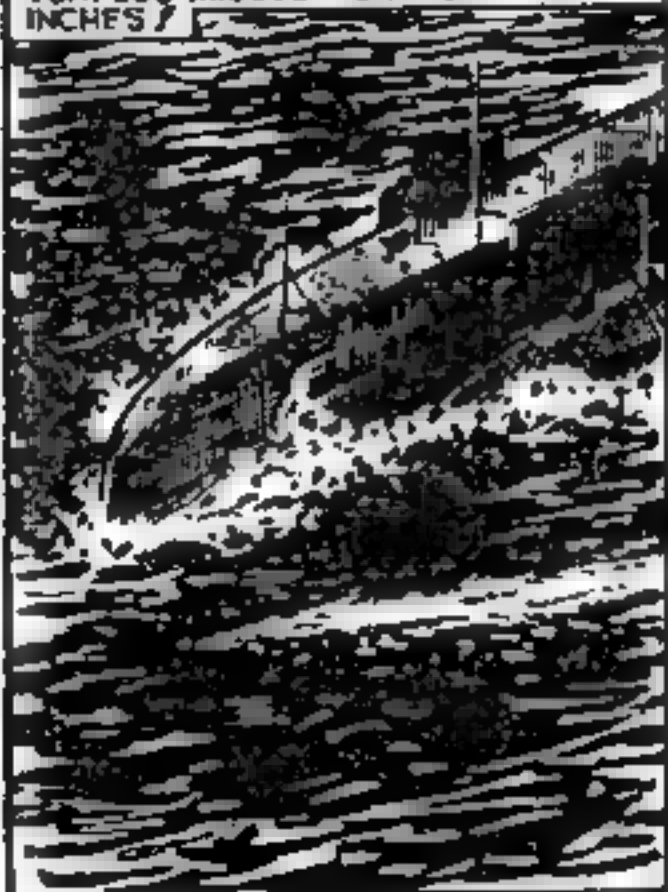
SUFFERING SNAKES!
TORPEDO TRACK TO PORT!
WE'RE BEING ATTACKED BY
U-BOATS!

A FAST MOVING, WHITE STREAK OF
FOAM WAS THE ONLY VISIBLE SIGN
OF THE DEADLY UNDERSEA MISSILE.

EMERGENCY
HARD-A-STARBOARD!
TORPEDO RUNNING PORT SIDE.
ALL HANDS, HANG ON!

COME ON,
CHIEFY—BRING
HER ROUND!

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GRIMSHAW DID NOT FAIL HIS SKIPPER. THE GERMAN TORPEDO MISSED—BUT ONLY BY INCHES!



ON HER NEW COURSE, THE SUBMARINE GRADUALLY ROLLED BACK ON AN EVEN KEEL.



Y'KNOW, NAV., I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT THIS OLD RATTLE-TRAP IS LUCKY. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT SINCE WE LEFT SCOTLAND—AND STILL NO CASUALTIES!

BUT HE WAS IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT BACK TO THE BATTLE, AS A TANKER AHEAD STOPPED A GERMAN TORPEDO.

POOR DEVILS / SHE'S ANOTHER WE'LL BE LEAVING BEHIND, I RECKON. BETTER GO ALONGSIDE HER, NAV—THERE MAY BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO.



AYE AYE, SKIPPER!

Teeth Of The Shark

AS SAMRA DREW SLOWLY UP TO THE CRIPPLED TANKER, A MERCHANT SEAMAN, STILL DAZED BY THE SHOCK OF THE EXPLOSION, MISTOOK HER FOR A GERMAN U-BOAT AND STUMBLE OVER TO THE TANKER'S AFTER GUN...




NEXT SECOND, HOWEVER, ANOTHER TORPEDO PUNCHED INTO THE TANKER AND SHE EXPLODED IN A GIGANTIC, EYE-SEARING BALL OF FIRE.



NO-ONE COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT TERRIBLE HOLOCAUST AND AS THE SUBMARINE SHEERED AWAY, THE TANKER TURNED OVER ON TO HER SIDE AND SLID BENEATH THE WAVES.




MEANWHILE, ABOARD THE FLAGSHIP, THE ADMIRAL PONDERED A MUCH DEEPER PROBLEM.



THE GERMAN BATTLESHIP BLUCHER IS OUT! WITH ANY LUCK, WE MAY BE ABLE TO INTERCEPT HER! BUT WE'LL HAVE TO USE EVERY AVAILABLE BRITISH SHIP— AND THAT MEANS LEAVING THE CONVOY TO FEND FOR ITSELF!

IT WOULD BE A MOMENTOUS GAMBLE...



HOWEVER, I'M SURE YOU WILL AGREE THAT WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE, GENTLEMEN, WE REALLY HAVE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER. THE ESCORT WILL BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY AND WILL SAIL TO MEET THE BLUCHER!

Chapter 3. Lone Escort

SO SHARK, WITH ONE 3.7 INCH GUN,
WAS LEFT TO GUARD THE CONVOY...



TOM CONSULTED HIS NAVIGATOR...



TWO AND A HALF DAYS BEFORE THEY COULD RELAX THEIR GUARD / TOM DECIDED TO POSITION *SHARK* IN THE CENTRE OF THE CONVOY. THAT WAY, THEY WOULD STAND AN EQUAL CHANCE OF MEETING ATTACK FROM ANY QUARTER...

RIGHT / NOW THAT WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE WE'D BETTER BREAK *ANOTHER* RULE AND BUNCH THEM UP TIGHTLY. WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE ANY STRAGGLERS. BRING EM IN CLOSER, SIGNALMAN.

AYE AYE, SIR.

BELOW DECKS, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GRIMSHAW SENSED THE EXTREME GRAVITY OF THEIR SITUATION -- AND KNEW THAT HIS WORST ORDEAL WAS PROBABLY TO COME.




I-I'VE NEVER KNOWN A TOUGHER SPOT THAN THIS ONE / I ONLY HOPE I DON'T LET THE SKIPPER DOWN /

DARKNESS APPROACHED AND WITH THE COMING OF NIGHT, THE MEN OF CONVOY P.Z. 81 BEGAN TO FEEL SAFER. BUT, THIS TIME, THE INKY BLACKNESS HELD NEW TERRORS FOR THEM.



SUDDENLY, THE BLOW FELL...

AFTER /
SHE'S BEEN
KIDNAPED!



THIS TIME THE CRY WAS "E-BOATS!" A FLOTILLA OF THE FAST, DEADLY SURFACE VESSELS HAD FOUND THE SLUGGISH MERCHANTMEN.

THEY HAVE NO ESCORTS /
WE WILL CUT THEM TO RIBBONS.
STAND BY TO ATTACK AGAIN!



THE LOW SILHOUETTE OF THE
SUBMARINE HAD ESCAPED THE
E-BOATS' NOTICE.

THEY'VE NOT
SPOTTED US YET / WE
MAY STILL BE ABLE TO HIT
THEM WHERE IT HURTS / FULL
AHEAD, BOTH ENGINES,
GUN CREW, CLOSE UP /



THE LEADING E-BOAT IN ITS SIGHTS,
SHARK'S SOLITARY GUN WENT INTO
ACTION — WITH DEADLY ACCURATE
EFFECT.



AS THE E-BAY LEANED FORWARD, THE WALLS
THE REST OF THE FISH TURNED TOWARDS THE JAW.
TOM REACTED SWIFTLY...



THE SUBMARINE WAS HERE AT THE
SURFACE AND TOM EXPLAINED TO HIS
CREW WHAT HE HAD IN MIND.



THESE E-BOTS CAN RUN
AROUND US - ON THE SURFACE /
OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO GET BEHIND
THEIR, SURFACE AND THEN NAIL THEM
WITH THE FORWARD GUN.

THE ONE OBJECT WAS TO GAIN THE FIVE THE
COUNTRY - TIME AND DISTANCE. FOR EVERY
SECOND, EVERY TURN OF THEIR SCREWS
BROUGHT THE MERCHANT SHIP'S NEARER TO
MORTAL.

I DON'T CARE IF THE OLD MICKER IS
SAY NOW AND YOU GO UP ON TOP OF YOUR
PRELAYS BULERS. CHOP - I AM IT HAVE
BITE STEAM / THE LATS ON THAT SUB.
WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO KEEP THE JERRIES
OFF OUR NECKS FOR EVER.



OKAY, I'LL INCREASE
THE PRESSURE / HAVE YOU
MADE OUT YOUR WILL?

IN THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE SUBMARINE, ALL THE CREW HAD NERVED THEMSELVES FOR THE INTRICATE MANOEUVRING.

INTERCEPTION COURSE
O-TWO-O, COX'N.

GOOD HEAVENS!
OLD GRIMSHAW IS ACTUALLY
SMILING! I DO BELIEVE THE
OLD FOX IS ENJOYING
THIS!

STEER
O-TWO-O,
SIR.

IT WAS A DARING PLAN, NEEDING
SPLIT-SECOND REACTION AND TIMING.

STEADY,
CHIEF, STEADY.
RIGHT-SURFACE!

WITH A WHIFF OF ESCAPING AIR, THE SUBMARINE BROKE SURFACE. SHE WAS HARDLY OUT OF THE WATER WHEN HER GUN CREW WERE RACING ALONG THE STEEL DECK.

THAT'S IT, LADS / CATCH 'EM BEFORE THEY SPOT US /

THE GUN CREW HAD NEVER WORKED SO FAST. THE SHELL WAS IN AND THE BREACH CLOSED IN RECORD TIME. THEN ...

FIRE /

THE TRAILING E-BOT CAUGHT THE SUBMARINE'S FIRST ROUND DEAD AMIDSHIPS. WITH AN EAR SPLITTING ROAR HER TORPEDOES EXPLODED...



THE GUN CREW WERE JUBILANT AT THEIR SECOND SUCCESS - BUT ALREADY THEY HAD A FRESH TARGET IN THEIR SIGHTS...



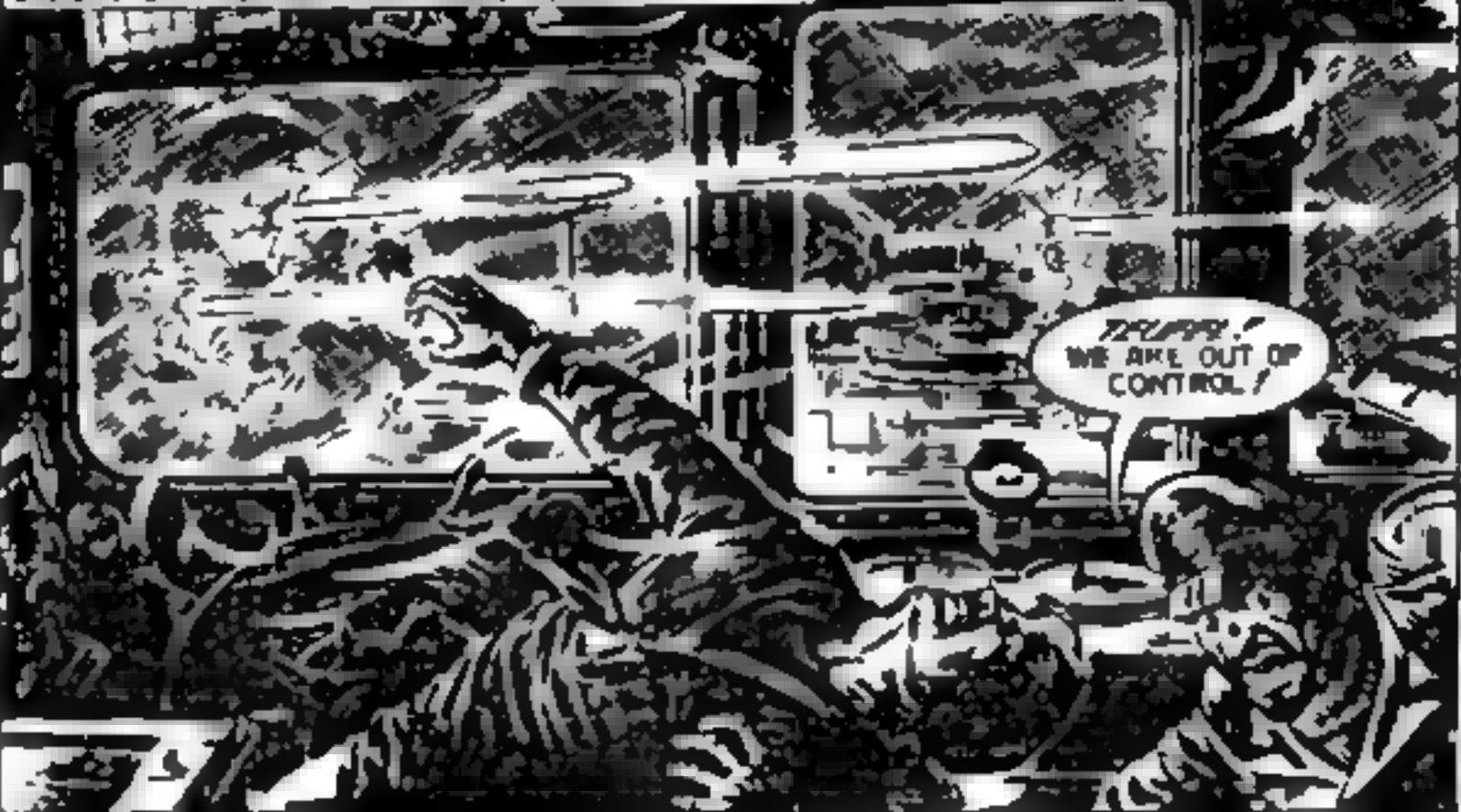
THE GUN SWING MENACINGLY TOWARDS THE ADVANCING ENEMY AND FROM THE CONNING TOWER THE LEWIS GUNS JOINED IN THE AWFUL CHORUS.

THAT'S RIGHT GUNNERS — GIVE THEM A PASTING!



WITH DEVASTATING ACCURACY, THE FIRE FROM THE LEWIS GUN SWEEP ALONG THE DECK OF THE LEADING E-BOAT SHATTERING THE WHEEL HOUSE.

TRAPPE! WE ARE OUT OF CONTROL!



OUT OF CONTROL, ONE E-BORT VEERED AT BREAKNECK SPEED TOWARDS ITS PARTNER. HER SKIPPER TRIED DESPERATELY TO AVOID THE COLLISION— BUT TO NO AVAIL.



THE CATASTROPHIC ROUT OF THE REST OF HIS PACK DETERRED THE REMAINING NAZI CAPTAIN FROM PRESHING HOME HIS ATTACK.

HE'S HAD ENOUGH /
WE'VE BEATEN THEM OFF,
BY THUNDER /



BUT AS THE LIFT CARRIED HIM HIGH-TAILED IT FOR HOME, TOM RUEFULLY SURVEYED THE DAMAGE THEY HAD DONE.

DO YOU RECKON
IT'S ALL OVER NOW,
SKIPPER?

I HOPE SO, NAV—
I REALLY HOPE SO!
FOR ONE THING, WE
CAN'T GIVE ANYMORE.
LOOK AT THAT LOT...

AND TO ADD EMPHASIS TO TOM STOREY'S WORDS THERE WAS AN URGENT SHOUT FROM THE HATCHWAY...

SIR! THE
FORWARD COMPARTMENT'S
FLOODING BADLY!

TOM AND REGGIE RUSHED DOWN THE LADDER HARDLY TOUCHING THE RINGS IN THEIR HASTE.

ARE THERE
ANY MEN IN THERE,
CHIEF?

CAN'T BE SURE,
SIR. WE HAD NO TIME
TO CHECK BEFORE WE
SEALED IT OFF.

HURRIEDLY MAKING THEIR WAY FORWARD, TOM REALISED JUST HOW MUCH OF A BATTERING 'SABOT' HAD TAKEN.

SIR CERTAINLY
TAKEN MORE OF A
BATTERING THAN WE
REALISED UP TOP,
CHIEF?

AYE, SIR,
IT'S A WONDER
ONE'S STILL ALOFT,
IF YOU ASK ME.

JUST BEFORE THEY REACHED THE FORWARD
COMPARTMENT THEY WERE MET BY AN
ANXIOUS CREWMAN.

IT'S PEARSON,
SIR—HE'S BEEN SHOT
IN / PERMISSION TO
OPEN HER UP,
SIR?

TOM COULD NOT BE SURE HOW MUCH WATER WAS BUILT UP BEHIND THE BULKHEAD, BUT HE COULD NOT LEAVE A MAN IN THERE TO DROWN.

RIGHT, REGGIE - I'LL OPEN HER UP! IF IT'S NOT TOO BAD IN THERE, I'M GOING IN, YOU SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND ME.

AYE AYE, SKIPPER!

THE MOMENT THE COMMUNICATING DOOR WAS UNBARRED, A WAIST-HIGH WALL OF WATER HIT TOM, BUT BEFORE IT COULD SWEEP HIM OFF HIS FEET, HE WAS THROUGH THE ENTRANCE.



THE DOOR SLAMMED
BEHIND HIM WITH A
DULL CRASH. WATER
SPARKLING ABOUT HIM,
TOM WADED TOWARDS
THE SERMAN, WHO WAS
OBVIOUSLY INJURED.

HELLO PEARSON—
I'VE COME TO GET
YOU OUT. WHAT'S
THE DAMAGE?

IT'S MY ARM, SIR.
I THINK IT'S BROKEN!

TOM HELPED THE INJURED
MAN TOWARDS THE DOOR
AND HAMMERED ON IT
WITH HIS FIST.

ALL RIGHT, REGGIE!
I'VE GOT HIM!
OPEN UP!

THE TWO MEN WERE ALMOST THROWN BOOBY THROUGH THE DOOR AS IT OPENED. WILLARD HADN'T WARNED THEM.

OH MY,
SKIPPER, WE'VE
GOT HIM!

WITH THE BLURRED SAILOR SAFELY IN THE SKY, TOM AND REAGAN WALKED IN TALK AGAIN, IN THE EARLY LIGHT OF DAWN THE COMPANY WAS STEAMING ON AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.

NOT BAD, IN
REPLACE? IT LOOKS
AS THOUGH JERRY
ONLY TAKEN ONE
OF OUR OWNERS.

VERY NEARLY TWO,
SKIPPER / IF THAT LEAK IN
THE FORWARD C BURNING UNIT
WAS ANY WORSE WE'D BE
AT THE BOTTOM, TOO /

A SUDDEN ROAR MADE BOTH MEN LOOK UP. THREE HURRICANES FLASHED OVERHEAD. THE MALTA-BASED FIGHTERS HAD COME TO SAFEGUARD WHAT WAS LEFT OF THEIR PRECIOUS SUPPLIES!



LATER, WITH A PROUD BUT BATTERED SHARK IN THE LEAD, THE GALLANT SURVIVORS OF CONVOY P.Z. 81 LIMPED INTO GRAND HARBOUR, MALTA.

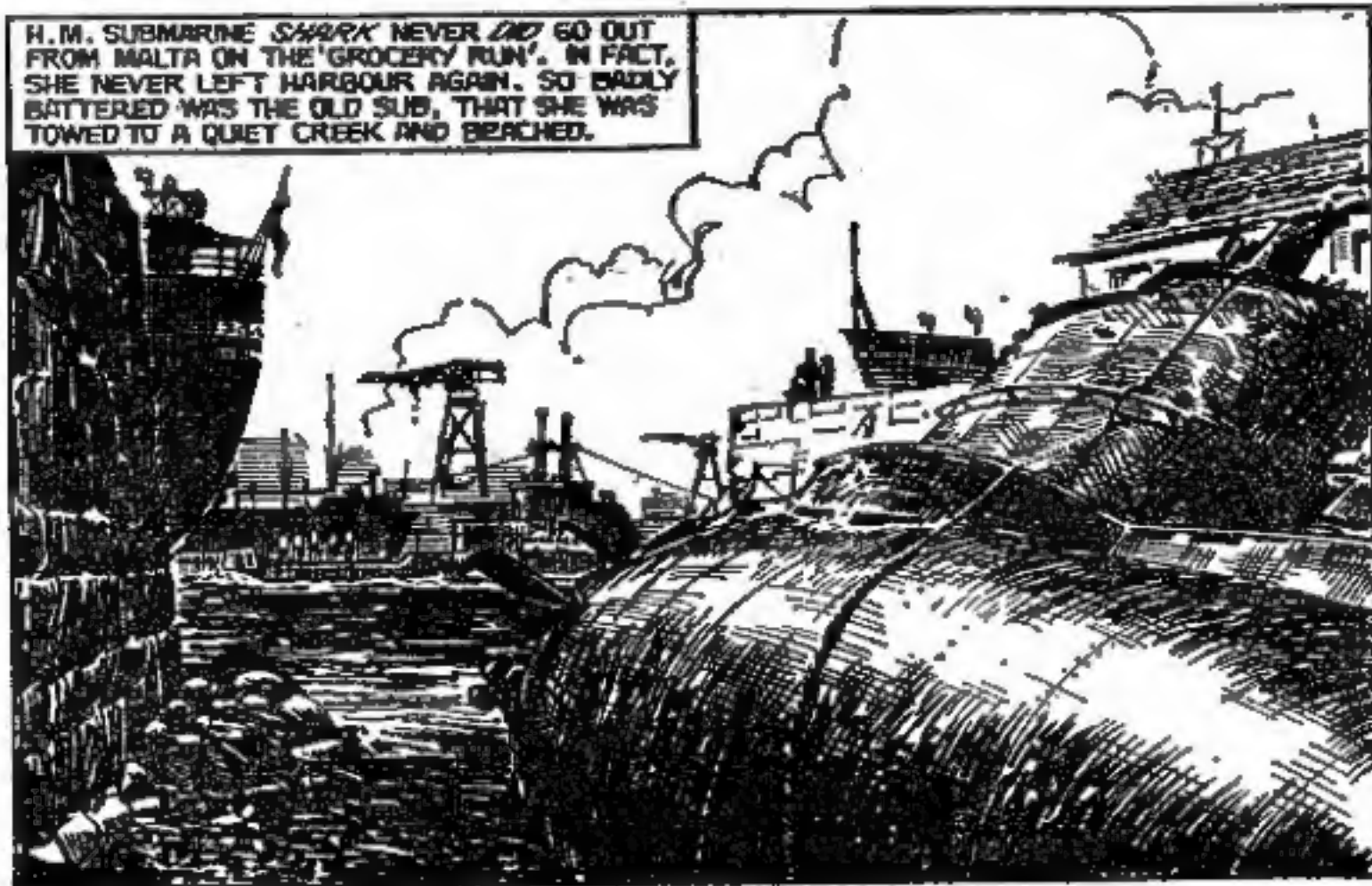


THAT NIGHT, DESPITE THE GENEROUS INVITATIONS OF THE GRATEFUL MALTA-BASED TROOPS WHO HAD HEARD THE FULL STORY OF THEIR EXPLOITS, *SHARK*'S CREW HELD A SMALL PARTY OF THEIR OWN.

GENTLEMEN—I AM PROUD TO 'AVE YOU IN MY LITTLE BAR / FOR THE SO BRAVE SAILORS OF H.M.S. *SHARK*. TONI OFFERS EVERYTHING ON THE 'OUSE... NOT THAT THERE IS MUCH LEFT TO GIVE!

THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU... ER... TONI, BUT, FIRST, WOULD YOU JUST LET US HAVE SOME GLASSES? WE'D LIKE TO DRINK THE HEALTH OF A FEW FRIENDS WHO ARE UNABLE TO BE WITH US TO-NIGHT.

H.M. SUBMARINE *SHARK* NEVER *DO* GO OUT FROM MALTA ON THE 'GROCERY RUN'. IN FACT, SHE NEVER LEFT HARBOUR AGAIN. SO BADLY BATTERED WAS THE OLD SUB, THAT SHE WAS TOWED TO A QUIET CREEK AND BEACHED.



LEUTENANT TOM STOREY WAS GIVEN COMMAND OF A NEW, WELL-EQUIPPED SUBMARINE CALLED *UNBEATEN*—A VERY APT TITLE, FOR CHIEFY GRIMSHAW AND MOST OF *SHARK*'S OLD CREW WENT WITH HIM!

THERE'S THE OLD *SHARK*! NEVER BE ANOTHER LIKE HER, EH, REGGIE P

HEAR, HEAR, SIR! I FEEL THAT SHE BRINGS US LUCK, SEEING HER AT THE START AND FINISH OF EVERY PATROL.

ME, TOO, SIR!

FAR FROM PUNISHING TOM STOREY, COMMANDER HENRY JACKSON SHARP HAD DONE HIM A GREAT FAVOUR BY PROVIDING HIM WITH A STEPPING-STONE TO A FIGHTING SUBMARINE AND A FIRST-CLASS CREW.

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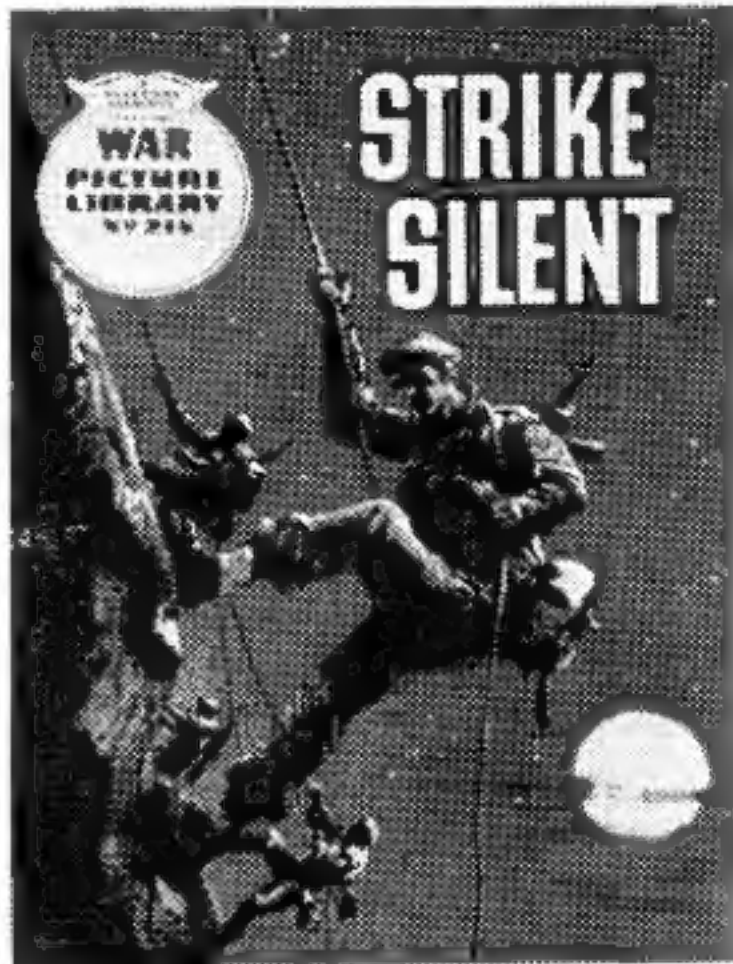
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